

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing an unsaturated carboxylic acid anhydride, comprising:

reacting an unsaturated carboxylic acid and a lower aliphatic carboxylic acid anhydride in the presence of:

a catalyst wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises an anionic organic compound which has at least one carboxyl group; and
a stabilizer.

Claim 2 (cancelled): The process according to claim 1, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt.

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Claim 3 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein said catalyst ~~comprises a metal salt and said metal salt~~ comprises at least one cation selected from the group consisting of Cr, Zn, Cu, Ca, Zr, Ti, Na, La, Hf, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 4 (cancelled)

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises an anionic organic compound which has at least one group selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acid, dicarboxylic acid, beta-ketocarboxylic acid, beta-diketone and mixtures thereof.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein said catalyst is selected from the group consisting of chromium acetate, zirconium acetylacetonate, titanium acetylacetonate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the unsaturated carboxylic acid anhydride is methacrylic anhydride.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the lower aliphatic carboxylic acid anhydride is acetic acid anhydride.

Claim 9. (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the unsaturated carboxylic acid is methacrylic acid.

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Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the stabilizer is selected from the group consisting of hydroquinone, hydroquinone monomethyl ether, topanol O, topanol A, phenothiazine, N,N'-diphenyl-p-phenylene diamine, and a mixture thereof.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, further comprising distilling the unsaturated carboxylic acid anhydride.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, further comprising separating the catalyst from the unsaturated carboxylic acid anhydride.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein a molar ratio of the carboxylic acid anhydride to the unsaturated carboxylic acid ranges from 0.5 to 1.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein a molar ratio of the carboxylic acid anhydride to the unsaturated carboxylic acid ranges from 0.55 to 0.65.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): A process for preparing methacrylic anhydride, comprising:

reacting methacrylic acid and acetic anhydride in the presence of:

a catalyst; and

a stabilizer.

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Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises at least one cation selected from the group consisting of Cr, Zn, Cu, Ca, Zr, Ti, Na, La, Hf, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises an anionic organic compound which has at least one carboxyl group.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein said catalyst comprises a metal salt and said metal salt comprises an anionic organic compound which has at least one group selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acid, dicarboxylic acid, beta-ketocarboxylic acid, beta-diketone and mixtures thereof.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein said catalyst is selected from the group consisting of chromium acetate, zirconium acetylacetonate, titanium acetylacetonate and mixtures thereof.

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Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein the stabilizer is selected from the group consisting of hydroquinone, hydroquinone monomethyl ether, topanol O, topanol A, phenothiazine, N,N'-diphenyl-p-phenylene diamine, and a mixture thereof.
